

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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1. Name: Central Falls Mill Historic District
2. Location: Between Roosevelt Avenue and Blackstone River
Central Falls, RI
3. Owner: Multiple, see individual inventory sheets
4. Description: The Central Falls Mill Historic District is an exclusively industrial district, including six major mill buildings and a stone dam. The district is a concentrated grouping of structures, ranged between Roosevelt Avenue (which forms the western border) and the Blackstone River (which is the eastern border).

Most of the buildings date from the nineteenth century, are massive, utilitarian structures of several stories, and are constructed of red brick; only one of the buildings is of stone. Except for the later Bryan Marsh Mill, where glass products were manufactured, all of the mills in the district were constructed for and occupied by textile and metals operations.

Most of the buildings in the district are oriented with their shorter sides facing Roosevelt Avenue and the Blackstone. This relationship of the mills to each other and the river was largely determined by a now-filled trench system, dating from the 1860s. The trench originally had two separate entry gates located above the dams, one of which led under the Kennedy/Stafford Mill, the other passed under the Pawtucket Thread Mill, the Central Falls Woolen Mill, and the Pawtucket Hair Cloth Mill.

No building in the district is unaltered; each has undergone varying degrees of modification and alteration. The district remains a textile manufacturing center and the altered condition of the buildings reflects the changing needs of manufacturers.

5. Dates: 1825, 1863, 1864, 1870, 1897, c. 1910.
6. Significance: The structures in the Central Falls Mill Historic District are the largest concentration of architecturally and historically significant buildings in the city. Central Falls developed as a manufacturing city whose economy was tied firmly to the growth of the textile and metals

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industries in the Blackstone Valley. This industrial district has always been the core of the city's economic life.

The boundaries of the district are drawn to include the original six water privileges created when, in 1823, the Central Falls Mill Owners Association was incorporated, and one additional mill adjacent to the privileged land. This regularized apportionment of water rights in the early 19th century, largely accounts for the orderly and increasingly intensive use of water power at this site throughout the 1800s. Of the mills which originally occupied the water privileges, two remain -- the Kennedy/Stafford Mill and the Pawtucket Thread Manufacturing Company Mill. Other mills in the district are the successors to the small plants located here in the 1820s.

Two of the largest mills in the district date from the post-Civil War boom period in Central Falls -- the Pawtucket Hair Cloth Mill and the Central Falls Woolen Mill. At the same period, the Kennedy Mill was enlarged, the trench system reconstructed to allow for two entry gates, and a new dam constructed. This renovation of the trenches in the 1860s increased the power available to these riverfront mill sites and prolonged the use of water power in the area.

Two later mills complete the district -- the Royal Weaving Mill, built in 1897, and the Bryan Marsh Mill, constructed c. 1910.

Architecturally, the Central Falls Mill Historic District contains the finest of the city's 19th-century mills. Located on the sixth privilege, the Pawtucket Hair Cloth Company factory has a handsome tower decorated with blind arches and an elaborately corbeled cornice. Other mills in the district are not so finely detailed, but taken together they form an impressive industrial riverfront.

7. Acreage: Approximately $4\frac{1}{2}$ acres
8. Plat 1, lots 95, 320, 14
9. UTM Reference: 19.302360 4639700

See also inventory sheets for:
Kennedy/Stafford Mill

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Pawtucket HairCloth Company Mill
Central Falls Woolen Mill
Bryan Marsh Mill
Pawtucket Thread Manufacturing Company Mill
Royal Weaving Mill

See also photographs # 1-4.

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1. Name: Kennedy/Stafford Mill
2. Location: 561 Roosevelt Avenue
Central Falls, RI
3. Owner: Roosevelt Realty Company
561 Roosevelt Avenue
Central Falls, RI
4. Description: This is a 4½-story, red brick mill (1825), with gable roof and clerestory monitor. It has a square end tower, originally capped by a flat-roofed belfry, now removed. There are brick additions on the north side (3 stories, 140 x 30 feet, 6 bays long) and on the east side (4 stories, 70 x 36 feet, 13 bays long), which date from the 1860s. The original mill is 10 bays long. Its floors, carried on wood beams and cylindrical wood posts, are of board-on-joist construction. A single story dye house with hip roof adjoins the eastern end of the mill. No water power equipment is in place.
5. Date: 1825, 1860s
6. Significance: The Stafford/Kennedy Mill is built on the earliest industrial site in Central Falls and is one of the oldest buildings in the city. The first dam was constructed here in 1780, and the water power used by manufacturers of scythes, other edged tools, and chocolate. Stephen Jenks located here in 1811 to finish 10,000 muskets under a contract with the federal government.

In 1825, John Kennedy (with Samuel Slater's partners, Almy & Brown) built the present mill. His choice of brick as a building material at this early date makes his mill a regional rarity. Kennedy manufactured cotton cloth here; the mill was later operated by John Gardner and, still later, by Rufus J. Stafford. The Stafford Manufacturing Company continued to produce cotton products here into the 20th century. Stafford built the additions to the mill, rebuilt the dam, and reconstructed the power canal system. The mill is now occupied by commercial tenants.

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7. Acreage: less than 1 acre.

8. Plat 1, lot 95

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1. Name: Pawtucket Hair Cloth Company Mill
2. Location: 501 Roosevelt Avenue
Central Falls, RI
- ✓ 3. Owner: Roosevelt Realty Company, Inc.
527 Roosevelt Avenue
Central Falls, RI
4. Description: This is a long, rectangular, 3½-story mill, designed by William Walker. The Hair Cloth Mill is about 200 feet long (7 by 25 bays), with an ell. Its gable roof has remarkable brick corbeling; the most prominent feature of the mill is its projecting central tower, decorated with blind arches and an open arched belfry. The mill's plank-on-timber framing is carried on both cast iron and wooden columns. Alterations include a new door opening in the west facade, removal of the belfry roof, and installation of a ramp into the tower.
5. Date: 1864
6. Significance: In terms of industrial history, this is a unique building in Rhode Island. Architecturally, it is an outstanding early work of a major Rhode Island architect. The Pawtucket Hair Cloth Company had been in operation for 8 years prior to the construction of the mill but had not been particularly successful; with the acquisition of Isaac Lindsley's patents for weaving haircloth in 1861, however, the company built up a virtual monopoly on the manufacture of the fabric which was used for furniture coverings, crinolines, and interlinings. Much of the raw fiber was imported from the great horse hair markets of Russia. The company was reorganized as the American Cloth Company in 1893 and, in the late 19th century, operated several hundred looms here.
7. Acreage: less than one acre
8. Plat 1, lot 320

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1. Name: Central Falls Woolen Mill
2. Location: 523 Roosevelt Avenue
Central Falls, RI
3. Owner: Roosevelt Realty Company
527 Roosevelt Avenue
Central Falls, RI
4. Description: The Central Falls Woolen Mill is a long, rectangular, red brick mill, set between the Pawtucket Hair Cloth Company Mill and the Pawtucket Thread Manufacturing Company Mill. The mill has a gable roof with a monitor, is 18 bays long, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ stories tall. The original mansard-roofed end tower was removed in the early 20th century when the Bryan Marsh Mill was constructed across its facade.
5. Date: 1870
6. Significance: The Central Falls Woolen Company was incorporated in 1870 by Phetteplace and Seagrave of Providence and James L. Pierce; the company operated 24 broad looms in the production of cassimeres and doeskins. Purchased in 1894 by Frederick Farwell of Newfane, Vermont, who used it for worsted production. In the early 20th century, the mill was used for glass products, it is now used for manufacture of narrow fabrics. The canal, now filled in, originally ran under the mill; Farwell supplemented water power with a 300-horsepower Harris-Corliss steam engine, since removed.
7. Acreage: less than one acre.
8. Plat 1, Lot 95

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1. Name: Bryan Marsh Mill
2. Location: 523 Roosevelt Avenue
3. Owner: Roosevelt Realty Company
527 Roosevelt Avenue
Central Falls, RI
4. Description: The Bryan Marsh Mill is a long, rectangular industrial building, set at right angles to the other major mills of the district and obscuring two of them from view. The mill is constructed of red brick, is 4 stories tall, and has a flat roof. The large rectangular tri-partite windows are separated by spandrels recessed behind the piers which divide the long 13-bay facades. A shallow corbeled cornice terminates the facade and is the only decoration of the building.
5. Date: c. 1910
6. Significance: The Bryan Marsh Mill, the newest building in the district, was the site of the introduction of glass manufacture to Central Falls. Bryan Marsh (and its parent company, General Electric) produced light bulbs here and in the Stafford Mill in the early 20th century. The Bryan Marsh Mill is now occupied by a metal cladding concern. The Central Falls' glass industry, now carried on by Corning Glass Company, is the largest single employer in the city.
7. Acreage: less than one acre
8. Plat 1, lot 95

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1. Name: Pawtucket Thread Manufacturing Company Mill
2. Location: 527 Roosevelt Avenue
Central Falls, RI
3. Owner: Roosevelt Realty Company
527 Roosevelt Avenue
Central Falls, RI
4. Description: This is a 4-story rubble stone mill (1825) built on the third privilege at Central Falls. The mill originally had a gable roof with clerestory monitor and a small cupola. The pitch of the roof has been modified, so that it is now virtually flat. The mill is about 78 by 44 feet, 5 by 7 bays; its granite-trimmed window and door openings have been modified, but some of the original 6/6 sash remains. Its stair tower has been converted into a passageway between the original mill and a 20th century mill built across its facade. Much of the interior framing has been modified; no historic machinery survives. The mill is now used to produce narrow fabrics and webbing.
5. Date: 1825
6. Significance: Despite its many alterations, the Pawtucket Thread Manufacturing Company Mill is one of the most significant industrial buildings in Central Falls. With the Kennedy Mill, it is one of the two oldest buildings in the city. The Pawtucket Company was formed by Jabel Ingraham, Bosworth Walker, William Allen, and Uriah Benedict, who manufactured cotton thread and yarn. By 1827, they had leased the lower story to Field and Jacobs, who were the first in Central Falls to manufacture textile machinery. The mill was later owned by Rufus Stafford; by 1881, it was used by Thurber, Horton and Wood for the production of sheetings, cotton cloth, thread and yarn.
7. Acreage: less than 1 acre
8. Plat 1, lot 95

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1. Name: Royal Weaving Mill
2. Location: 467-471 Roosevelt Avenue
Central Falls, RI
3. Owner: Fabrics by Lyon, Inc.
2 Cross Street
Central Falls, RI
4. Description: The oldest section of this mill (1897) was designed by Dwight Seabury of Pawtucket for silk production. A long rectangular brick building, it is 1-story on its west elevation facing Roosevelt Avenue and, as the land slopes away toward the river, becomes a full 2 stories tall. The mill is covered by a wooden saw-tooth roof to provide the soft light favored for weaving. The mill windows are double-hung, 12/2 sash. The main entrance is in the center of the west facade and, like the mill itself, is undecorated. A 3-story addition is set between the river bank and the mill; the two sections are separated by a freight access. A second addition, equal in size to the original mill was constructed on the south side in 1898; it was also designed by Seabury. Like the original mill, this is a long rectangular building, 1-story on the west end and rising to a full four stories on the eastern end as the land slopes away to the river. The western facade is asymmetrical, with a small office projecting from the southwest corner, a second entry off-center, and a freight door on the northwest corner. Windows have segmental or round heads, granite sills and 1/1 sash. The cornice of the mill is boldly corbelled. A narrow, 15-foot passage separates this addition from the original mill. The western end of the addition originally had a saw tooth roof, but this has since been replaced by a flat roof.
5. Date: 1897, 1898
6. Significance: The Royal Weaving Company was started by Joseph Ott, a German who had been a designer and a silk operative before his emigration in 1884. In 1887, he began a weaving business after perfecting a silk loom. He incorporated the Royal Weaving Company with Darius Goff and Daniel Littlefield (president of the Pawtucket Hair Cloth Company whose mill is located just across the street). The Royal Weaving operations were carried on in the Hair Cloth Mill before construction of this mill. With its large addition, constructed within a year, and further construction in Pawtucket, Royal Weaving became a major producer in northern Rhode Island. In the early 20th century the Central Falls plant housed 700 looms.

See continuation sheet 19

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7. Acreage: less than one acre

8. Plat 1, lot 14